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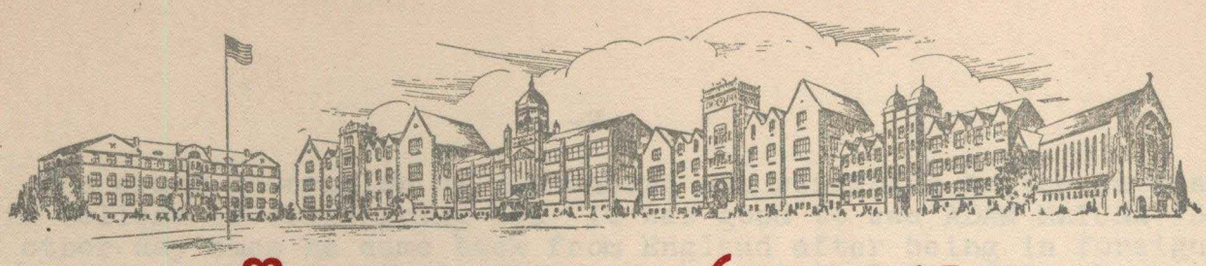

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

Number 65 July 13, 1945

Good Morning:

If any of you fellows get to see the SS MUHLENBERG VICTORY when it goes into service as a cargo ship and troop carrier next month, I hope you'll recall that this letter was written on the morning after the night before. We have just come back from Baltimore where we had the thrill--and it was a real one--of seeing the great new Victory Ship go down the ways at the Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyards, the traditional bottle of the foamy stuff broken over its bow by Mrs. Levering Tyson.

When I say that all of us down there had a thrill, that's putting it a bit mildly. It's a big and beautiful ship and in addition to its immediate task of helping win this war, it has been designed to take its place in competitive post-war world trade. Yesterday afternoon it slid gracefully down the ways into the Patapasco River just off Chesapeake Bay. In a few weeks it will be fitted out as a ship that can take cargo to foreign ports and bring home American troops. It's first run will be to Europe.

Ensign Dave Tyson '47 pressed the button that sent the big and powerful ship down the ways just as his mother smashed the bottle of champagne against its graceful bow. Papa and the rest of us stood by grinning from ear to ear and cheering--but our cheers were drowned out by the whistles of the shipyard and the deep-throated tooting of the tugs that waited for the 76th Victory Ship to be launched at the Bethlehem-Fairfield Yards.

Muhlenberg men were on hand for the launching. Among those we had a chance to say hello to were Dr. P.S. Barringer '11, Sam Bertolet '33, and his charming wife, Walt Reisner '15, who as president of the Alumni Association was the official alumni representative; Dr. William A. Hausman '99, who, with James P. Bender, represented the Board of Trustees; Dr. Charles McCormick '09; Russell Bachman '20; Joe Zamites '35; Navy Lt. Maurice Purcell '31, Navy Lt. Ralph Kerstetter '26; George Howatt '40, Rev. James Powers '36, George Newhard '30, Dr. John Haws '26 and his wife, Al Simpson '40, and Dr. Donald Shay, the latter a former member of our faculty. Dr. Ira Zartman '23 was detained in Washington but his wife represented him on the launching platform.

Well, there'll be more on the same subject with plenty of pictures in the Alumni Magazine.

The new college year began on Monday and we had another thrill. Seventy-one new students, the largest freshman class since the war began making its inroads into our life around here, settled down to the work of the first term. The student body of 138 civilians and some 50 special summer students also is larger than it was during the last term. That makes all of us feel pretty good.

The Loyalty Fund is something else that gives us a thrill--now that we're talking about them. It's up to $9,728 with a week to go and that should definitely mean that we'll hit the $10,000 mark before the auditors make us close the books next Friday. We'll give you a complete report in the next letter and once again say our thanks then.

We're off now on the new Navy Training program. The new commanding officer, Lt. S.B. Christian, formerly of the New York Telephone Co. came aboard this week replacing Lt. Roderick Light. The unit--men assigned for the Navy Academic Refresher (V-5) program--arrives on July 26. Some 300 men will come aboard then and in September the number will be augmented to nearly 400. Then a busy year really begins.

The grand procession of Muhlenberg men returning to the campus of their College is still going on. It was good to see ADAM MATUSA '39 the other day when he came back from England after being in foreign service since February 1944. Adam was attached to the 791st Bomb Squadron, a unit of the famed Eighth Army Air Force. With him on his little visit was Jean Paulick of Wilkes-Barre--the gal he plans to marry when he can lay his uniform aside.

The other day when we were out buying some of the things we put aboard the SS MUHLENBERG VICTORY we bumped into HENRY PHILIPS '39 helping his father at the old stand at 4th and Hamilton Sts. Henry went on inactive duty in June and will be discharged the end of July. He was a lieutenant with the Air Technical Service Command and saw service in the Mediterranean and China-Burma-India theatres during his four years in the Army.

And talking about discharges--we went wrong on LT. JOHNNY MYERS '43 who was back to the alumni meeting a few weeks ago. Johnny has been on inactive service since the middle of May and is planning to come back to College in November. Right now he's helping his wife take care of their ten-week old baby.

Just as we were writing this letter ED HALPERIN '44 dropped in fresh from the campaigns of the European theatre. He was with the Third Army in the battles that knocked the Ruhr pocket out of the war and wears campaign stars for action in Northerm France, Central Europe, and the Rhine area. Biggest change we noticed was the fact that he is wearing some trimming on his upper lip and that he has added about 15 pounds. Ed was with the 359th Field Artillery, attached to the 95th Division.

We also had a visit with CHAPLAIN H. EDGAR KNIES '25 who spent 33 months overseas with the 29th Division of the Eighth Air Force and the Air Force Service Command. Practically all of his time was spent in England. Since entering military service in February 1941 he has acquired a pair of gold oak leaves.

Another one of the visitors during recent days has been S/SGT. PAUL F. WALTER '43, former tail gunner on a B-17 Fortress with 50 missions over Africa and Italy to his credit. Paul was given an honorable discharge on May 26. He has been back in this country since February and since that time has had a wife, the former Marie Schellhammer.

We missed seeing CPL. JOHN C. ROWE '46 when he dropped in the other day but he left his record for us--fighting with the 311th Engineering Combat Battalion through France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, and to Berchtesgaden itself. He has the Bronze Star and the Good Conduct Medal. Sometime or other he expects to be reassigned and then may add more stars to the row he already wears.

LT. JOHN MUNCHAK '40 talked things over with Doc Shankweiler, Gurney Afflerbach, Haps, and myself when he came back on leave from the Welch Convalescent Hospital at Daytona Beach, Fla., where he is doing orthopoedic work.

From the various public relations offices of the armed forces we have learned that T/5 JULIUS BRICKER '36 has been admitted to the Moore General Hospital at Swannanoa, N.C. after having served with the infantry on Guam, Toki Shima, Le Shima, and Okinawa; that ENSIGN LEROY ZIEGENFUSS '44 has been transferred from the Midshipmen's School at Columbia to duty on a heavy cruiser with the Atlantic Fleet; that BRUCE HANDELONG '45, S1/c, has been serving aboard a destroyer in the Western Pacific for five months; and that JAMES A GLAAB V-44, S1/c, is stationed at the Atlantic Fleet's motor torpedo boat squadron training center at Melville, R.I.

And with that miscellaneous information cleared away it's about time to look at the mail that continues to come in from all parts of the world. Before we do that, however, we'd like to remind you that it really is important that we have your correct military address. In these days of shifts and redeployment there are bound to be many

letter was the death of LT. CHARLES DUNNING, killed on Okinawa on April 27. He also had to report that LT. ARLIN BUBECK and LT. TOM CANDRICK, former V-12 trainees, were wounded in the Okinawa fighting. An advance tip that the boys were getting Okinawa under control came from PVT. FRANCIS H. GENDALL '30 who is counting on the B-29's to help the Japs change their minds about going on and on with this thing.

Shifting to the Philippines, we have it on the authority of CHAPLAIN LUTHER GERHART '22 that on one day he helped dedicate four chapels on the islands--all of them debt-free. His last night on Oahu was spent with Muhlenberg men. CHAPLAIN RALPH SELL '28 and LT. FRED GEHR '32 have taken over the reins of the Muhlenberg Alumni Club in Hawaii and Luther is getting another one organized in the Philippines. He reports, by the way, that CHAPLAIN ELMER TRUCHSES '26 is on his way home. WARREN HIMMELBERGER '43 suggests that the boys in the Philippines look him up at Weather Central there. The entertainment out there is better than the food, he says. And we can believe it, for when it comes to entertainment they say it's difficult to beat "OKLAHOMA" and "MEXICAN HAYRIDE", both of which he saw since he landed in the Philippines. JOHN SYLVESTER '39 checked in again from the Philippines. He's counting his points and at the last check had 82.

S/SGT. FRANCIS HOWELLS, SGT. ALBERT WALKER, and SGT. HENRY PUJAT, who were on the Marine staff all through the months the boys in green were training on the campus, are together on an island in the South Pacific. They'd like to bump into either CAPT. MIKE SCELSI or LT. RALPH DAWSON, their first boss on the Muhlenberg base.

Any day now CAPT. FRED DRY '37 should be walking in here. We see by the latest edition of the Morning Call that he has just been discharged from the Army. You'll remember that he picked up a Silver Star and a Bronze Star while fighting in Germany.

We had a letter the other day from another Marine who played on that first famous basketball team--LT. JIM CAPEHART, apparently on Guam. He has seen JIM CLOUSER, TOM CANDRICK, LYLE BLACK, KENNY STONE since he arrived there. There also has been word from SGT. SEYMOUR BEST '44 who saw the war in Burma come to a close. Before the battles ended he received the Air Medal.

And here's the word from the German front: CPL. KENNY MILLER '47 has said goodbye to the Blue Danube and has moved back to Mannerheim. The ever faithful PFC. BUD BUTTERWICK '46 is still over there and wishing for better movies; PVT. TIPPY JOHNSON '31 has been removed from the ranks of the combat boys, but he's still in Germany--or was on June 25. S/SGT. HERB GORIN '35 reports that while the German Armies have been defeated, the people haven't been and there are plenty of Nazi sympathizers. He's all for universal military service and believes it necessary to keep a sword over the German people until they can be reeducated to a new philosophy of living. Late in June when his outfit took a little trip for a softball game, SGT. BUD BOSSICK '43 met BILL RIZOS '46 and the two had a better time bulling about Muhlenberg than they had watching the ball game.

And here are the promotions: SECOND LIEUTENANT SAMUEL RICHESON '44 Sp(G)1/c DONALD WOODWORTH '46; PFC. WALTER A SNYDER '47; PFC. NIMSON ROBERTS '33; T/4 OAKLEY BLAIR '41; ENSIGN ROBERT EVANS '44; ENSIGN ROY KERSCHNER '44; Sp(A)2/c GEORGE HOWATT '40; ENSIGN DAVID TYSON '47; S/SGT. HERB GORIN '35; and ENSIGN JOHN A WALKER '44.

Well, that's the end of the story--not because there isn't any more story but because we have reached the weight limit once again. Best of luck to you--and don't forget to drop in whenever you get back here.

Sincerely,

Gordon

Gordon B. Fister
For the Alumni Office